

The Dying Man

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A few years ago, I spent half my day with a dying man. I remember these things about him: his name, his past profession, and that he was dying alone.

I never saw his résumé, the size of his house, or how much money was left in his bank account. I was not curious to know, either. But I bet they seemed significant once upon a time, at a dinner party, maybe. He worked as an engineer.

On that day—the day he died—no one who had cared about those things was there.

I was a stranger, yet I saw his last breaths. It was a curious day.

This world teaches us to do many things. To set goals (S.M.A.R.T ones, in fact) and to meet them. To maximize profit and minimize loss, and to use other people, to our advantage. We learn to build storage houses and efficiently fill them with glorified trash; to talk like we matter, and live like it, too.

Someday, we will all be that dying man. Not fully here, and not quite there; mere wisps of breath. When that day comes, will this world be at your bedside?

Sometimes, I wonder.

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Dedicated to a friend: May you find what you are searching for.